



Healthy Alaska



October 2010

National Bullying Prevention Month

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Brain Booster:



Fine Tuning

Bachbot: Repair scheduled at 7 AM

Handelbot: Repair scheduled at Noon

Rubnsbot: Repair scheduled at 8 PM

Mozartbot: No repair necessary

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. This national awareness month is designed to educate educators, students, and community members on the negative effects bullying has on victims and bullies and to work to promote policies that prohibit bullying.

The state of Alaska defines bullying as an intentional written, oral, or physical act, when the act is undertaken with the intent of threatening, intimidating, harassing, or frightening the student and physically harms the student or student's property, substantially interferes with the student's education, is so severe that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

A nationally representative survey by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) found that, while bullying reaches its peak between 6th and 8th grade, 10 percent of students in grades K-12 admitted to be bullied at some point. Additionally, the 2009 national youth risk behavior survey found that 19.9% of high school students report being bullied on school property. Comparatively, the 2009 statewide YRBS found that 20.7% of Alaska's high school students report being bullied on school property.

Bullying can have devastating effects on the victims' self-esteem and academic performance, and can cause depression and suicidal tendencies. Likewise, children who bully their peers tend to express antisocial behavior and tend to engage in riskier and/or more violent behavior (e.g. smoking, under age drinking, getting into fights, etc.). This type of negative behavior can affect the school climate by creating an environment where students feel unsafe or unwelcomed.

Educators, parents, and community members can help prevent and reduce bullying by taking steps to change the school climate and the ways people view bullying. This can be done by adopting and enforcing anti-bullying policies, training teachers and school staff on bullying prevention, discussing bullying with students on a regular basis, and increasing adult supervision in areas where bullying frequently occurs.

To view the department's bullying laws and resources, visit the harassment, intimidation, and bullying website at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolsafety/bullying.htm>.

The PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) center offers National Bullying Prevention month resources located at <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/index.asp>.

The US Department of Health and Human Services has created an anti-bullying campaign designed to teach students about bullying and ways to stop it. This website offers information and tips for both children and adults. To view the website, visit <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/default.aspx>.

Alaska's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Laws

State law, AS 14.33.200-14.33.250, requires districts to have a policy in place prohibiting the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student.

The creation of this anti-bullying policy must follow the district's policy-creating procedures, allowing an opportunity for input by parents and guardians, school employees, community members, and volunteers. The policy must emphasize positive character traits as well as the students' responsibility to comply with the policy and the consequences of noncompliance. The statute also mandates that all district employees, students, or volunteers who witness or have reliable information that a student has been subject to bullying must report the incident to school officials. According to AS 14.33.230, individuals making a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying in good faith are immune from a cause of action for damages arising from a failure to remedy the reported incident or for making the report.

AS 14.33.210 requires school districts to make an annual report of all bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents occurring on school property or transportation systems used by the school that result in suspensions (both in school and out of school) or expulsions. This information is collected yearly on June 30 through the department's suspension, expulsion and truancy reporting system and is used to report harassment, intimidation, and bullying data to the state legislature.

A sample policy can be viewed at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolsafety/Docs/PolicySamples.pdf>.



Brain Booster—

Answer:

If it isn't Baroque, don't fix it.

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FEEDBACK

We are looking for feedback! If there are any changes you would like to see made and/or suggestions for content of the newsletter, please send them to Meghan Nelson at

meghan.nelson@alaska.gov

School Health Partners:



www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/



www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/default.htm

Cyber-Bullying

Traditional bullying involved aggressive and intimidating acts such as hitting, pushing, teasing or name-calling. With the increased utilization of technology, however, youth have discovered new ways of harassing and bullying others: cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is aggressive, intimidating, humiliating, and harassing behavior against a person using electronic forms of contact. These electronic forms can include emails, instant messaging, text messaging, social networking sites, blogs, chat rooms, and other cyber technologies.

Like traditional bullying, cyber-bullying is persistent and demeaning, often leaving the victim feeling helpless and alone. Cyber-bullying differs from traditional bullying, however, because it can occur at any time of the day or night, can be distributed to a wide audience, and can be anonymous.

The rate of cyber-bullying has increased in recent years. According to a 2009 Cox Communication survey of teens 13-18 years of age, one-third of teens have either experienced or engaged in cyber-bullying or have known a friend who have done either. A telephone survey of preteens and teens by the Opinion Research Corporation (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids) found that only 35% of teens who had been cyber-bullied had told their parents about their experience. Nonetheless, most teens feel that cyber-bullying is a serious issue and that stricter rules should be in place to monitor their electronic interactions.

Educators and parents can help prevent cyber-bullying by educating students and others about it, ensuring that district policies address cyber-bullying, monitoring students' use of computers and other internet-capable devices, and encouraging students to talk when they experience or witness cyber-bullying.

For more information and tips, visit <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/cyber-bullying.aspx>.

Greenworks Walk to School Challenge Grant

October is International Walk to School Month. During the month of October, elementary and middle school students and their families can help their schools win one of five \$5,000 grants by walking or bicycling to school. Parents are invited to sign up online for the "Walk to School Challenge" and log their families' walking or bicycling trips on behalf of their school. The five schools with the highest levels of participation will be eligible to win a \$5,000 grant. Frequent walkers and bicyclists can also earn individual prizes, ranging from green shoelaces to reusable water bottles. Sign up at <http://www.facebook.com/greenworks>

NFL Network PE Teacher of the Year

For the first time, this year's Keep Gym in School campaign will be honoring an "NFL Network PE Teacher of the Year." The public can nominate PE teachers online at www.keeptgyminschool.com between September 1-January 31 and the winning NFL Network "PE Teacher of the Year" will be announced at an event in New York City during 2011 NFL Draft Week. Click in the "Nominate Your Teacher" box in the top right corner. The winning teacher will receive a \$10,000 award in addition to a \$10,000 grant for his/her school's PE program.

Classroom Activity of the Month

Skeleton Scavenger Hunt

On a large sheet of paper, trace the outline of a cardboard or plastic skeleton decoration with black marker. Disassemble the skeleton and hide the parts around the room. Give the students hints that lead them to the hidden parts. Each time a part is found, students must recreate the skeleton by taping the part on the outline. The game ends once every part is correctly placed on the sheet.

Halloween Candy Alternatives

Trick or treating does not have to mean candy overload. The following ideas make tasty alternatives to the usual sweet treats:

- ◆ Individual bags of pretzels
- ◆ 100% Fruit Leather
- ◆ Boxes of Raisins
- ◆ Popcorn stuffed into "skeleton" gloves or packets of microwave popcorn
- ◆ 100 Calorie Snack Packs
- ◆ Packages of Trail Mix

